

1. During the talk of the Japanese moral and the cultural aspects, we have discussed about the 'Space And Silence' . In your own words, describe your impressions. (Within 500 words)

The 'Space and Silence' dominated a majority of the Japanese society as tacit understandings. Every decisions among the people, is based on it and it turned out to be the ground of their communication skills. The example of the real story of a group of people who did not help the fire injured fellows except their friends, was shocking (Mitsubishi Factory). Non-friends were just staring at them simply because of how they took the situation in unusual ways. This unspoken agreement among them reflects a part of Japanese moral which can be taken as an awful way or something else. (To add something more which I didn't speak during the class, the loss of the world war II was also due to the same logic, and the true tactical records and the stories surrounding Yamato battleship reflected this 'space and silence' . The analysis of this area was done by the founder of the Yamamoto Bookstore in Japan. I will tell you about the book 'Air And Its research' some time during the next dinner!). The story of 'Narayama' reflected two mind sets in the Japanese society. One, is the spoilt ones due to the politics along with the almighty unexplainable 'space and silence' , the other is the ones who are external to the given traditions, trends and its constraints but purely with caring heart who lived throughout the difficult society.

(This answer can be purely from the listener's impressions. There is no definite answers in this question. As long as the students get the sense of the tacit understandings of the Japanese society, then it is good. It is still a difficult topic to speak with but a touch of knowing it might have given them some ideas.)

2. Traditional Japanese music originates from many cultures namely, the Chinese, Koreans, Indians and even from western music. The traditional instruments are mainly divided into three categories. They are woodwinds, strings and drums. Give example of one instrument among the three, and describe about the instrument including its characteristics in your own words. (Within 1000 words)

Any descriptions (or an attempt to describe the characteristics of the instrument) from one of the followings will do.  
Shamisen, Hichiriki, Koto, and Sho.

Descriptions of the pitch/scales/harmonies of any one of the above, is a bonus mark.

3. Claude Debussy's resemblance to the traditional Japanese music can not be neglected. What kind of scales did he use to achieve it?

Pentatonic Scales have two types. *Hemitonic* scales and *Anhemitonic* scales. *Hemitonic* scales contain one or more semitones while the *Anhemitonic* scales do not contain any semitones. Debussy used both to make his compositions and music as oriental as possible regardless of the nationality. Japanese music is close to *Anhemitonic* scales which made some of his pieces, close to the traditional Japanese tunes.

(If the students can answer the type of the pentatonic scales, it is a bonus)

4. There are mainly, two types of compositional approaches in the Western classical music. Please describe what they are. (within 500 words)

In terms of Western classical music, we can see two important compositional approaches. The first is the development of a single musical motif into a much larger mass of material. The second, the opposite of the first, is a gradual simplification of material by moving from textures of great complexity to simpler textures through reduction.

(The students are expected to at least figure out the first compositional approaches but any attempt of explaining the compositional technique is a bonus)

5. Contemporary Japanese music has characteristics which can not be found in the western classical music. In your own words, describe what they are. (within 500 words)

Takemitsu Toru was different from the other avant-garde Japanese composers at the time. He was interested in creating the sound on its own rather than in the new compositional techniques themselves. His compositions were not recognised until the late 1960s. His approach of mixing traditional Japanese music using the instruments was something new and reformative which made the ground of today's contemporary Japanese music. And the ideas of 'The silence itself has the world of its own music and it possesses so much imaginations', is yet another characteristic found in the contemporary Japanese music today.

(If the student can remember and tell the last line, it is a bonus)